



In Transit

July/August

2014

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



From the General Manager's desk

The way forward

Some of the uncertainty that's been hanging over us for the past few months cleared on

July 21 when the County Council took action on service reductions.

By now, you probably know that the Council approved 161,000 hours of bus service cuts that will start with our next service change on Sept. 27. Following our service guidelines, we'll cut our least productive routes and trips in this first round. Details are available online at www.kingcounty.gov/metro/future.

The Council also approved another 188,000 hours of service cuts, but put off identifying the specific routes or changes so an ad hoc committee—the County Executive and three councilmembers—can review revenue forecasts and confirm or adjust the plan we recommended in April. We expect to send a new recommendation for February 2015 service cuts to the Council on Sept. 2.

Decisions about service cuts in June and September 2015 will be made later this fall, as part of the county's budget process. Also later this fall, we'll be watching Seattle's Nov. 4 vote on the ballot measure to fund Metro service within the city. If the measure passes, it could allow us to keep a substantial amount of our remaining service.

With so many things going on that will shape our future, it's too early to say what our service and staffing will look like a year from now. But I can assure you that we will be

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Joe Fahlgren's wife Cindy and grandson Kaleb were on hand to help him celebrate being named VM Employee of the Year.

Fahlgren named VM Employee of the Year

When he heard his name announced as Metro's VM Employee of the Year at a June ceremony, Millwright **Joe Fahlgren** was nearly speechless with surprise. While his wife Cindy, grandson Kaleb, and many coworkers and Metro staff members looked on, Fahlgren received congratulations, gifts, and praise from Department of Transportation Director **Harold Taniguchi**, Metro General Manager **Kevin Desmond**, VM Manager **Randy Winders**, Assistant VM Manager

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Jackson is 2013 Operator of the Year

Jeffery Jackson was chosen by his Operator-of-the-Month peers as Metro's 2013 Transit Operator of the Year. On May 29, at a surprise ceremony at Metro's Atlantic Base attended by family and friends, co-workers, management, and other VIPs, Jackson was honored as the latest of Metro's "best of the best."

On the job, Jackson navigates a trolley bus through heavy traffic in downtown Seattle, along a twisting web of overhead wires. It's careful,

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Jeffery Jackson holds the bus poster honoring him as Metro's 2013 Operator of the Year.



We'll Get You There

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Celebrating RapidRide and the F Line

With the June 7 start of service on the RapidRide F Line, Metro fulfilled its promise to bring a new type and level of service to six heavily-used transit corridors.

On June 6, members of the public joined staff members and dignitaries from King County, Metro, and the cities that were soon to be connected by the F Line (Renton, Burien, Tukwila, and SeaTac) at The Landing in Renton to celebrate the launch of the last of Metro's planned RapidRide lines.

The F Line replaced routes 110 and 140. It provides 69 percent more service than Route 140, which didn't go to The Landing. The F Line also offers more timely and convenient connections to key destinations like Westfield Southcenter Mall, Boeing, and downtown Renton—and to transportation hubs at the Tukwila Sounder station, the Link light rail station at Tukwila International Boulevard, the Burien Transit Center, and the Renton Transit Center.

"This new route helps meet the need to improve access in our diverse neighborhoods while providing opportunities for residents to leave cars at home," said County Councilmember **Dave Upthegrove** at the launch event. He added that RapidRide is "better for the environment and the health of our communities."



Marking the next-day launch of the F Line were, left to right, Renton City Councilmember Marcie Palmer, King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove, King County Department of Transportation Director Harold Taniguchi, Metro Transit Service Development Manager Victor Obeso, King County Executive Dow Constantine, RapidRide Man, Tukwila Mayor Jim Haggerton, Federal Transit Administration Deputy Regional Administrator Ken Feldman, and Renton Mayor Denis Law.

The five existing RapidRide lines have all had ridership growth compared to the regular service they replaced. Some of this growth has been quite substantial: 76 percent since 2010 for the A Line in Federal Way, and 70 percent since 2011 for the C Line in West Seattle.

On June 19, Metro had an in-house "RapidRide Finish Line" event to celebrate the program's achievements and its promising future, and to acknowledge the contributions of our dedicated and talented RapidRide Team, led by program manager **Karen Rosenzweig**. The event offered opportunities to reminisce and appreciate all the vital teamwork that has gone into creating, marketing,

implementing, and sustaining RapidRide.

After seven-plus years of sustained effort that included the purchase of 113 new and distinctive buses, the installation of signal-priority systems at 154 intersections, the construction of 295 stations and stops, and the implementation of 384,000 annual hours of RapidRide service—not to mention a few headaches along the way—the agency-wide team had reason to celebrate.

More info and a video on the F Line launch are available on the Metro Matters blog (<http://bit.ly/metro-blog-f-line>).

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General Manager

striving to achieve a sustainable system we can all count on.

Because of the cuts we'll be making this September, we will eliminate about 100 bus operator assignments—but we don't expect to lay off any employees in 2014. Any layoffs resulting from service reductions or other budget decisions adopted by the Council would happen early next year.

I want you to know that it took careful

workforce planning to avoid layoffs in 2014, and we'll continue to work hard to minimize any layoffs we may need to make in 2015.

I'm reminded almost daily just how dedicated Metro employees are to meeting the high standards of schedule, service, safety, and security that our customers expect and appreciate. I'm particularly impressed by the contributions of those who work behind the scenes—base chiefs, dispatchers, coordinators, information operators, marketing and communications staff members, safety and transit police officers,

and many more. You can read about several outstanding examples in the pages of this issue.

On a final note of appreciation, I want to acknowledge Jim O'Rourke, now retired, for the many contributions he made to Metro throughout his amazing career (most recently as Transit Operations Manager). Jim not only continued a legacy left by those who came before him, he took it to a new level. My thanks to Jim—and to you all.

— Kevin Desmond, General Manager



Performance corner

RapidRide C and D line satisfaction rebounds

The RapidRide C and D lines were launched in September 2012. The C Line replaced routes 54 (local) and 55, and connects Westwood Village and downtown Seattle via Alaska junction. The D Line connects Ballard and downtown Seattle via Uptown, and replaced routes 15 (local) and 18 (local).

Metro surveyed riders aboard the C and D Lines in April 2013, and again in April 2014 to get feedback about the services in general, assess changes in rider satisfaction, and gain insights on customer-perceived benefits or disadvantages of the new RapidRide lines.

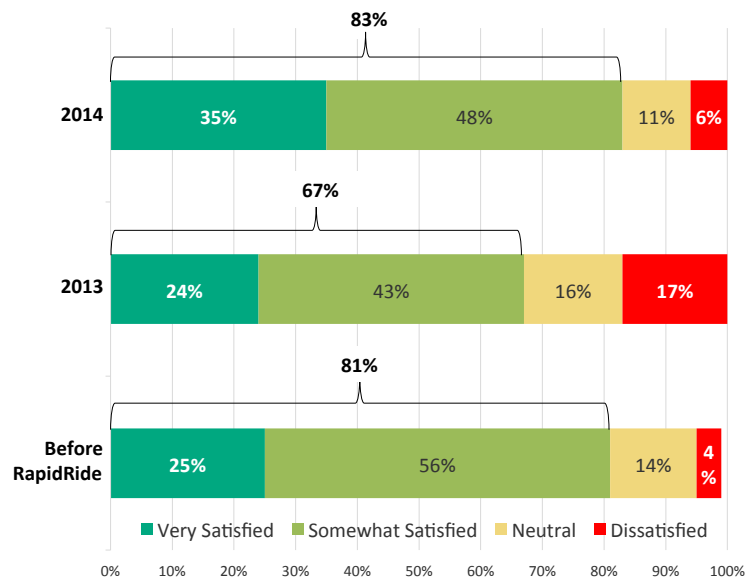
Survey results showed that satisfaction with the C and D Lines had dropped six months after implementation, but has rebounded in the year since then (see charts).

Riders of both the C and D lines said they were satisfied with the frequency of service, not having to rely on a pre-determined schedule, shelters and features at bus stops, and the hours of service. Satisfaction with personal safety has decreased since the service was introduced.

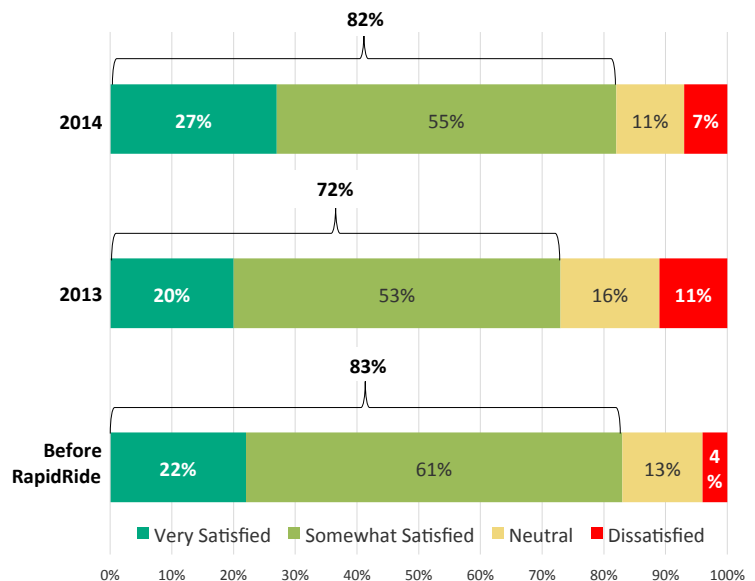
Satisfaction with comfort on the bus continued to decrease among D Line riders, but increased in 2014 for C Line riders—while still remaining below the pre-RapidRide level. Over 70 percent of C and D line riders perceived the RapidRide brand as a high-quality, “best of Metro” experience.

The full report is available online at Metro’s Accountability Center:
www.kingcounty.gov/metro/reports.

Overall Satisfaction with RapidRide C Line



Overall Satisfaction with RapidRide D Line



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VM Employee of the Year

John Alley, and Fahlgren’s chief,
Peter Vrinceanu.

Fahlgren joined Metro in 1990 as a VM mechanic. He became a millwright in 2005, and today plays an important role in maintaining a diverse and complex array of machinery. He helps rebuild and repair coaches and manufacture parts

that keep Metro’s aging fleet of motor and trolley buses on the road.

On call 24/7, Fahlgren is ready to ‘put out a fire’ at any time. His maintenance skills, knowledge of equipment, and diverse responsibilities make him one of the most appreciated and recognized employees at the Component Supply Center. He also provides support to all VM locations, and is always happy to help out fellow millwrights.

Fahlgren’s down-to-earth, friendly, and generous spirit extends beyond the workplace. He’s very involved in his community and extends his skills and generosity to benefit friends, neighbors, etc. At work, his professionalism, skills, knowledge, no-nonsense approach to issues, and honest desire to help everyone around him made it easy for his peers to choose him as their 2014 Employee of the Year.

KUDOS IN TRANSIT



Gordon Guhl, left, gives pointers to Operator Larry Subelbia during a class on pedestrian safety at Ryerson Base.

■ **Guhl named First-line Supervisor of Shake-up** — In June, **Gordon Guhl** was named Transit Operations First-line Supervisor of the Shake-up for Fall 2013. Guhl's bosses say he has shown extraordinary commitment to service and professionalism in interacting with the public and co-workers throughout his Operations Training career. As a first-line supervisor in training, he delivered a well-prepared, well-received presentation at the 2014 Washington State Insurance Pool convention. The talk outlined Metro's dynamic approach to training operators on ways to respect and thoughtfully approach customers with mental-health issues, and it resulted in multiple state agency requests for copies of Metro's training materials for riders with disabilities.

■ **Klein tops at Metroadeo (again)** — Atlantic Base Operator **Tammy Klein** took first place in the operator division at the 38th Annual Metroadeo, held June 14 at the Training and Safety Facility in Tukwila. Klein is now a four-time winner, having won previously in 2009, 2011, and 2013. She'll represent Metro at the

Washington State Rodeo on Aug. 17 in Spokane, and at the APTA International Bus Rodeo next May in Fort Worth, Texas. **Steven Banham** (South Base) placed second, and **Tom Ponischil** (Central Base) placed third. **Joseph Rivers** (South Base) placed first in the Maverick Division, and North Maintenance mechanic **Ryan Stringfellow** won the Non-Operator Maverick Division. **Dan Bennett** (Atlantic Base) had the best first-time score, and **Michael Schuster** (Central Base) had the most-improved score.



Tammy Klein is now a four-time Metroadeo winner.

■ **High finish at International Rail Rodeo** — Our rail operations and maintenance teams did an outstanding job of representing the region at the APTA 2014 International Rail Rodeo, held June 14 in Montreal. Our teams combined to match last year's fourth-place overall finish in a field of 15 highly skilled operations and maintenance teams from across the US and Canada. The operations

competition included Metro Transit Rail employee **Bryan Mathews**, who partnered with **Karen Bennett** of Sound Transit/Tacoma Link. They took first place in the Operator Safety Test and fourth place overall in the operations competition. In the maintenance competition, Metro employees **Mike Stromberg** and **Nick Keolker** teamed up with **Jack Smith** of Sound Transit/Tacoma Link to earn perfect scores on two maintenance events and finish seventh among 18 teams.

■ **Earle shows dedication** — Base dispatcher/planner (East Base) **Victoria Earle** (currently a relief base supervisor) took it hard when she had to cancel a trip recently. In an email to East Base Superintendent **Ken Johnston**, she wrote, "Unfortunately, I was forced to cancel one piece today...I tried everything to fill it but drive it myself. What a way to end my week ☹ my perfect record was ruined. Saturday is a new week and we can try it again. See you all on Monday." Johnston said Earle's message shows real ownership. "She did not want to cancel work," he said. "She felt like she was letting everybody down. I have other base dispatchers who won't give up trying to fill work even after the sign-in time has passed. As long as the run still has time, they're thinking about passengers who might need a ride. We're lucky to have people who care so much about our customers."



Victoria Earle takes her job personally.



Al Ramey, second from right, is honored along with two other bus drivers with long safety records. From left: APTA Chair Peter Varga; Ralph Spain, Maryland Transit Administration (42 years); Jess Quintero, VIA Metropolitan Transit (48 years); Ramey (51 years); and APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy.

■ **Ramey nets national safety award** — Operator **Al Ramey** was honored in May for his 51-year safe driving record at the American Public Transportation Association Bus and Paratransit Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. Hundreds of transit leaders, workers, and advocates gave Ramey a standing ovation as his name was announced. “It was exhilarating!” Ramey said. “I’ve received recognition over the years, but this was right at the top.” Ramey was also profiled by The Seattle Times on May 26 (read the article at <http://bit.ly/rameyST>).

■ **Teamwork nets major fuel tax refund** – King County Business and Finance Officer **Gayle Sreibers** had long questioned why, as she’d been told, we could not claim a refund for fuel tax paid on purchases of unleaded gas used in the Vanpool program. When Vanpool Planning Coordinator **Karen Martin** showed Sreibers a letter from the Washington State Department of Transportation indicating that Vanpool programs do, in fact, qualify for the fuel tax claim/refund process, they and Department of Transportation Business and Finance Officer **John Beckwith** concluded there was basis to pursue a claim. Working with the Washington State Department of Licensing, they

compiled a test claim that went back as far as state law allowed—five years, to 2009. It was no easy task, but it worked—on June 9, we got a check in the mail for \$155,571.38. By year-end, Sreibers said she expects to collect about \$1,500,000 in fuel tax refunds through 2013. Future claims will bring in about \$300,000 annually.

Transit operators of the month

June 2014

Atlantic Base: **Richard Martin**
 Bellevue Base: **Brian Hopkins**
 Central Base: **Kyle Gulke**
 Eastside Base: **Patricia Morneau**
 North Base: **Brent Hardwick**
 Ryerson Base: **Donald Sherman**
 South Base: **Shirley Simmons-Lovings**

July 2014

Atlantic Base: **Vickie Stanley**
 Bellevue Base: **Wai Chan**
 Central Base: **Michael Deeter**
 East Base: **Godofredo Plantilla**
 North Base: **Milos Pavlovic**
 Ryerson Base: **Chu Lee**
 South Base: **Sebsebie Basha**

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Operator of the Year

methodical work. He cautions fellow electric trolley bus drivers to “take it easy and don’t get in a hurry... don’t speed up when you’re behind schedule.”

At the May 29 ceremony, Metro’s General Manager **Kevin Desmond** said of Jackson, “He’s a top performer among our thousands of drivers. We’re proud of his service and pleased to honor him with this year’s award.”

“Jeff is one of the nicest people you’ll ever meet,” said Transit Operations Manager **Jim O’Rourke** (now retired). “He usually has something positive to say, and he’s usually smiling. I’m not at all surprised that his fellow operators elected him.”

Jackson first joined Metro as a part-time operator in 1979, going full-time in 1986. He’s known for his focus on safety and customer service. Customer commendations characterize him as a “fantastic” operator, “very professional and courteous,” who “waits for customers when they are running to the bus stop.” A three-time operator of the month honoree (March 1991, March 2007, and September 2013), Jackson is also closing in on a 29-year safe driving award.

In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available at www.kingcounty.gov/InTransit.

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to **In Transit**, KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Clemenger**: 206-477-3839 or anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov.

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We'll Get You There

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SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division



Trainee guide puppies practice riding under the seat on a retired Metro bus.

■ **Guide puppies train on historic Metro bus** – Guide Puppies of Seattle, a local volunteer group that raises puppies for Guide Dogs for the Blind, needed to train their charges in the finer points of riding public transit. The Metro Employees Historic Vehicle Association (MEHVA) responded by providing a special training excursion on the newest addition to its historic fleet. Eight puppies and their human guides boarded coach #3374, a 1999 Gillig, at the Phinney Neighborhood Center for a round-trip ride to the Seattle Center and Pioneer Square. Some of the trainees were reticent to board at first, but by the end of the trip all were adept bus riders. More photos are available at <http://bit.ly/bus-puppies>.

■ **Prevention is key at Transit Safety Summit** – Our June 2 Transit Safety Summit focused on transit-pedestrian incidents. Keynote speaker Gordon Graham, a risk management expert, showed ways to identify core critical tasks—those with high risk potential that don’t happen often and provide little time for decision-making. These tasks, he said, need frequent refresher training to keep employees ready to handle challenges successfully when they do arise.

■ **Stress relief for Control Center employees** – Transit Control Center (TCC) coordinators manage bus service around the clock and often work under pressure. They get few opportunities to take breaks, and exercising or relaxing during those breaks was difficult until the control center’s new Stress Reduction Center opened in May. A Healthy Worksite Makeover grant submitted by TCC Chief **Janice Berlin** funded the conversion of an 11-foot by 14-foot room that formerly housed radio equipment. The new exercise and stress-reduction center features an elliptical trainer, treadmill, stationary bike, and other fitness equipment.



TCC stress-busters (left to right) Jeff Wamsley (TCC superintendent), Daniel Matthews and Brian Dunbar (TCC coordinators), and Janice Berlin (TCC chief) try out new fitness equipment in May.

■ **Washington Women in Trades Career Fair** – The annual Washington Women in Trades Career Fair showcases non-traditional career paths for women, like longshoreman, high voltage electrical worker—and Metro bus driver or mechanic. On May 9, high-school, alternative-school, and vocational-center students joined other career seekers at the Seattle Center to learn what it’s like, and what it takes, to work in the trades. Metro and other King County agencies were there to help inspire



Benita Grace (left) and Veronica Busby from Metro’s Rail Group share information about working at Metro at the 35th annual Women in Trades Career Fair.

our next generation of talent. Metro staffed both an information booth and an outdoor bus display where visitors got to “picture themselves” as a mechanic or bus driver and share the photos with friends on Twitter and Facebook. Our volunteers shared their own stories: how they got started in their careers, any struggles they overcame, and the rewards of a Metro career. These personal accounts resonate with participants and are a large part of our continued success at this event.

■ **Workforce Development eLearning website launched** – Transit employees have a new online resource for personal career development. KC eLearning (Skillsoft) offers more than 2,000 training courses, ebooks, and videos for use by employees from work or home, 24/7, at no cost to you or your department. Please explore this new service, and note that it’s intended for use *on your own time*—outside of your regular work day—unless otherwise directed by your supervisor. Check it out at <http://bit.ly/metro-workforce-development>.

■ **Car show entries shine** – A diverse collection of vehicles was on display at the 26th annual King County Employee Car Show, held June 14 at the Transit Safety and Training Center in conjunction with the Metroadeo. For the first time, all trophy-winning vehicles (by popular vote) were owned by family members of King County employees. A 1953 Chevrolet pickup owned by Loree Summers took first place, followed by a 1978 Fiat Spider owned by Bob Yetter and a 1968 Ford Mustang owned by Beau Miklethun. The trophies were handcrafted by Metro's Component Supply Center. The show is sponsored by the Metro Employees Historical Vehicle Association.



This year's first-place trophy, crafted by the Component Supply Center, went to Loree Summers for her cherry-red 1953 Chevrolet pickup.

■ **ORCA To Go takes to the streets** – Kicking off its street fair season, the Pass Sales Office's ORCA To Go outreach team set up shop at the University Street Fair on May 17-18. Their booth offered full ORCA fare card sales and re-valuing services, and responded to precisely 412 questions during the fair. They sold 59 standard cards, 21 Regional Reduced Fare Permit cards, and 3 replacement cards, for a total of \$2,574. The team has a full schedule of regional street fairs and festivals throughout the summer.

Security Sensitive



Metro's security nerve center

Metro has more than 100 security officers under contract, providing 24-hour protection for many of our facilities. The nerve center of all of that support is the Security Monitoring Center (SMC), which operates 24/7, year round, in newly-updated digs at the parking garage on Sixth Avenue South.

It provides continuous closed-circuit monitoring of Metro's transit centers and parking garages, plus other sites like the Atlantic-Central Operations Building and Revenue Processing Center.

SMC officers watch hundreds of video feeds, answer panic-station calls, help with Metro garage issues, and more. Here are two incidents that illustrate the importance of their work:

1. On a very cold winter day, an officer watching the monitors noticed an apparently intoxicated man sitting on the ground at a transit center. While monitoring other screens, the officer kept thinking about the man on the ground. Finally, he turned the camera to center on the man, saw that he was not doing well, called 911, and directed responding aid units to the man, who turned

out to be suffering from severe hypothermia. Once in the ambulance, he had a heart attack. Medics worked on him for hours in the ambulance before they were finally able to stabilize him. He survived because of the actions of the SMC officer.

2. A SMC officer watching video feeds saw a teenager drinking on the top floor of a parking garage. The young man then tied one end of a long garment to the railing. As he tried to tie the other end around his neck, the officer called 911. The police got there in time, and the suicidal young man was taken by ambulance for medical intervention.

Most days probably pass slowly at the SMC, with officers fighting off boredom. But events like these show us how important it is to have people of instinct, action, and compassion watching our facilities. I'll have more stories from other posts next month. Stay secure.

— **Mark L. Norton**, Manager
Transit Security and Emergency
Management

Send comments and ideas on Metro security, emergency management, and homeland security to mark.norton@kingcounty.gov.

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On the Move

Systems Development and Operations

Alexander Bailey, intern II — June 16

Transit Human Resources

Mary Crawford, employee and labor relations representative — June 9

Vehicle Maintenance

Adam Birkholz, mechanic (TLT) — May 5

Jon Morrison, equipment service worker — May 5

In Our Thoughts

Russell DeCory, vehicle maintenance mechanic (retired, Atlantic), passed away May 28

Jeannette Willis (retired transit administrative support specialist III, North Base) passed away July 8



ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Operations

Wendy Ehrman, transit operator (Central) — May 30; 33+ years

Michael Gillman, training instructor (Training Center) — June 30; 23 years

Don Horton, transit chief (Central) — June 19 (last day); 33+ years

Bruce Kennedy, transit operator (North) — May 30; 38 years

Edith (Edie) Redmond, transit operator (Central Base) — May 1; 38+ years

Daniel Sullivan, transit operator (North Base) — August 1; 35 years

Power and Facilities

Dan Schwartz, line material worker (Power Distribution) — July 18 (last day); 24 years

Rail

Kendall Carsen, operations and maintenance supervisor (SLUS) — May 30; 34 years

Systems Development and Operations

Tom Friedman, IT project manager II (Systems Operations) — June 30 (last day); 38 years

Vehicle Maintenance

Curtis Colvin, mechanic (East) — July 1; 22+ years

Stephen Core, mechanic (South) — June 1; 23+ years

Robert McCallen, equipment service worker (Atlantic) — July 1; 25+ years

Larry Randall, equipment service worker (South) — June 1; 40+ years

Steven Robinson, mechanic (East) — June 1; 7 years

Promotions and Job Changes

Customer Communications and Services

Sonja Fleming-Schuett to pass sales representative (Customer Services; rehired 5/28)

Metro Transit Police

Captain Jesse Anderson to King County Sheriff's Office Internal Investigations from MTP Operations

Captain Marcus Williams to captain (MTP Operations) from sergeant (Burien/Precinct 4)

Operations

J. Wesley Cain to base dispatch/planner from supervisor-in-training (North)

Benita Grace to transit administrative support specialist III (North) from Link Light Rail

Michael List to interim manager (Transit Operations) from superintendent of operations (Ryerson)

Kevin Maguire to acting superintendent of operations from base chief (Ryerson)

Michael McGrath to acting chief (East Base) from first-line supervisor

Nickol Metcalf to acting base chief (Ryerson) from first-line supervisor

Eric Stewart to base dispatch/planner from supervisor-in-training (North)

Rail

Joanie Guillen to rail laborer (rehired 6/9) from rail track and ROW maintainer

Jason Smith to rail signal and communications technician from rail laborer

Service Development

Sunny Knott to acting transportation planner III from transportation planner II (Market Development)

Cindy Watanabe-Mezs to acting transportation planner II from project/program manager I (Market Development)

Vehicle Maintenance

Brian Moriarty to acting equipment dispatcher from equipment service worker (North)

New Hires

Design and Construction

Tuan Nguyen, civil engineering intern — June 16

Kayla Pingel, project management intern — May 12

Sabrina Weschler, project management intern — June 23

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Page Blazei, intern II (Accessible Services) — June 18

Power and Facilities

Curtis (Kurt) Dickie, chief of radio maintenance (Power Distribution) — June 2

Rail

Steven Kennedy, rail SCADA system specialist-3rd Shift (Link) — May 27

Service Development

Sonja Burseth, intern III — June 12

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